

# BREEDING OF THE RED-KNEED PLOVER, *CHARADRIUS CINCTUS*, AT MAYLANDS, W.A.

By R.H. STRANGER, 28/76 East Street, Maylands, W.A. 6051.

## INTRODUCTION

The Red-kneed Plover, *Charadrius cinctus*, is a regular visitor to Perth between late spring and early autumn, but there are few breeding records. Storr and Johnstone (1988) list only two breeding sites for the Swan Coastal Plain: Herdsman Lake and Maylands.

In 1985 I observed breeding at the southern quarry in Maylands and in view of the scarcity of breeding data for the Swan Coastal Plain I present this breeding data here.

## THE QUARRY

The southern quarry at Maylands is bounded by Peninsula Road, Clarkson Road, Swan Bank road and Johnson Road. The clay was mined for the manufacturing of bricks and the quarry had a variable depth of between two and three metres. The irregular bottom combined with variable water depth to form separate pools of water, the number varying according to season. Some pools had gentle gradients and evaporation during summer substantially reduced their size.

Each permanent pool had areas of sedge and/or *Typha* or *Juncus* rush, at the edges or on islands, and growths of algae. These pools were interspersed with flats and islands of bare clay.

## BREEDING RECORDS

In 1985 small numbers of Red-kneed Plover occupied the quarry from early January until early August, the peak numbers of 6-8 being seen in late-January and throughout February. Counting the exact numbers was impossible for the birds moved from one area to another as I walked around the quarry.

On 20 January there were a few birds in the quarry and an adult gave a broken-wing display close to me. On a second sweep of the area I noticed a very small chick, possibly only a few days old. It waded out into shallow water and an adult then followed it and stood over it, providing shelter. That chick was not seen again.

On 22 February there were several birds in the quarry and in the eastern corner there was a pair of adults with two small chicks about a week old.

On 28 February two adults and two chicks were in the same corner of the quarry. While one of the adults tried to decoy me with a broken-wing display the two chicks, which had been spending most of their time in shallow water, hid in shallow water amongst the *Typha* or *Juncus* rush.

On 11 March at the same site an adult was attending two chicks, which had

grown considerably. At this time a few adults and juveniles were in other parts of the quarry so it seemed that birds were entering and leaving the quarry.

By 14 March the "chicks", now better described as juveniles, were still in the eastern corner of the quarry. One adult attended them. On 18 and 19 March there were one adult and three juveniles in the eastern corner of the quarry.

On 2 April there were two juveniles alone in the eastern corner of the quarry and I presumed that they were the two that had been raised there. One, the larger of the two, had the crown darker than the back and the white wing stripe was well developed. The other had the crown the same colour as the back and the white wing stripe was less developed. I presumed this to be a sexual difference.

On 22 February 1986 there were some 15-20 birds in the quarry, including 5-6 juveniles, some of which were quite young while others had the white wing stripe. I judged that breeding had finished for the year and consequently could not say if breeding had taken place in the quarry or if the young had come from elsewhere.

Since this time the quarry has been fenced off and access to me denied. The water level, fed by a spring in the adjacent but connecting north quarry, which used to be regularly pumped out, has steadily risen some 1 metre or so, covering the flats and islands and some of the vegetation, and rendering it less attractive to waders. It is planned that the quarry will be filled in and will become a site for residential housing.

#### REFERENCE

STORR, G.M. and JOHNSTONE, R.E. 1988. Birds of the Swan Coastal Plain and adjacent seas and islands. *Rec. West. Aust. Mus. Suppl.* 28.

### NATURAL HISTORY NOTES ON THE MEGAMOUTH SHARK, *MEGACHASMA PELAGIOS*, FROM WESTERN AUSTRALIA

By TIM M. BERRA, Department of Zoology,  
Ohio State University, Mansfield, Ohio 44906 USA  
and BARRY HUTCHINS, Department of Aquatic Vertebrates,  
Western Australian Museum, Francis Street, Perth, Western Australia 6000

#### ABSTRACT

The third known specimen of *Megachasma pelagios* and the first from the Indian Ocean washed ashore at Mandurah Estuary about 50 km S. of Perth, Western Australia on 18 August 1988. The 5.15 m male weighed 690 kg. It was frozen the same day and eventually preserved with formalin by intramuscular and intraperitoneal injections and immersion in a formalin-filled, plastic-lined hole. Approximately 1,660 litres of full-strength formalin were added to the water in the hole to make a 10% solution. The total cost of preservation was A\$3,231. Permanent storage has yet to be arranged. Megamouth is classified in its own family Megachasmidae, but at least one authority considers it to be related to the basking shark, *Cetorhinus*. The six known specimens are from Hawaii, California, Western Australia and